



Greetings everybody,

This spring we have a lot of events coming up for Veterans and Veterans advocates. April 9<sup>th</sup> is Veterans Day on the hill, and we will be taking a bus from the Crookston Walmart parking lot at 5:30 a.m. that day to attend the event. Please let me know as soon as possible if you would like to ride on the bus. April 11<sup>th</sup> is our Veterans Benefit fair that we host at the Minnesota National Guard Armory from 10-2. We have plenty of Vendors coming with information for Veterans and their dependents so please try to attend as it is a great event.

One of the biggest changes the V.A. has made is the way Veterans will login to V.A. online sites. The procedure can be very frustrating to initial sign up. But once you have been verified it works pretty well. Please use the login directions included in this newsletter to help you get set up. But, let us know if you need any assistance with this or anything else pertaining to Veterans Benefits.

Take care,

Polk County Veterans Service Officer

Kurtis Ellefson

# VETERANS DAY ON THE HILL 2025

**WHEN:**  
**APRIL 9TH, 2025**

**DAV of MN Presents:**  
**Free Veterans and Supporters Lunch**  
(One Block from Capitol at 600 Cedar Street, St. Paul)

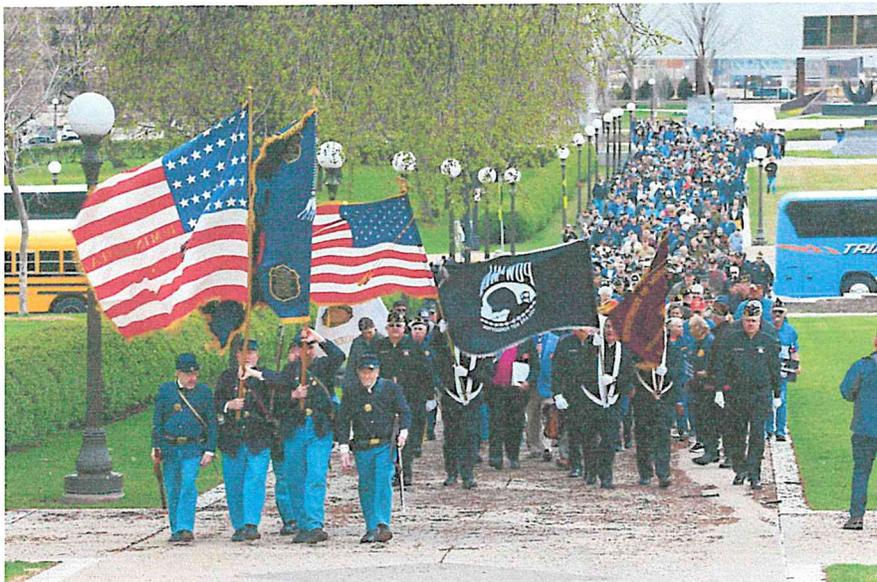
**Doors Open @ 10:00AM FOR COFFEE**

**LUNCH PROVIDED**

**PRESENTATION @ 12:00PM**

**Veterans March to the Rally @ 1:00pm**  
(Short Walk from Armory to State Veterans Service Building 20 West  
12th St, St. Paul )

**CTF and MACVSO Present:**  
**Rally in the Rotunda 1:30-2:30pm**



**ANY QUESTIONS PLEASE CONTACT-**  
**TRENT@DAVMN.ORG:**

**NO MEMBERSHIP IN  
ANY ORGANIZATION  
REQUIRED.**

**ALL SUPPORTERS ARE  
WELCOME!**



**Topics Include:**

PASSING A CLEAN  
VETERANS OMNIBUS  
BILL

INCREASING THE  
AMOUNT OF THE  
PROPERTY TAX VALUE  
EXCLUSION

REDUCED COST  
HUNTING AND FISHING  
LICENSE FOR DISABLED  
VETERAN

**Meet Your Lawmaker!!**

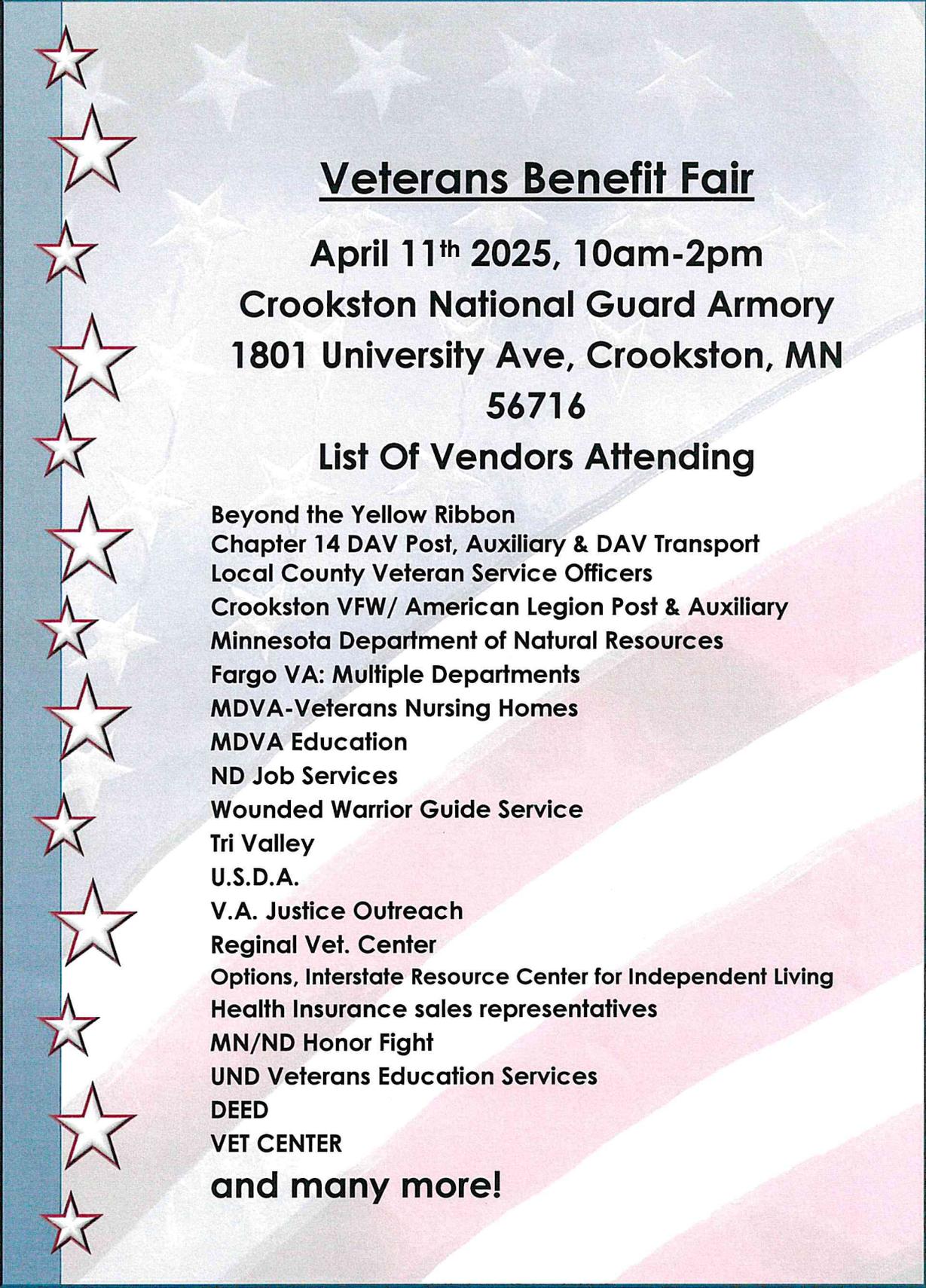
A MINIBUS RUNNING  
FROM THE ARMORY TO  
THE CENTENNIAL AND  
SENATE OFFICE  
BUILDINGS 10-1130.

MAKE YOUR  
APPOINTMENTS TO SEE  
YOUR LAWMAKERS!



**DAV OF MINNESOTA**  
**BENEFITS**  
**PROTECTION**





**Veterans Benefit Fair**

**April 11<sup>th</sup> 2025, 10am-2pm**

**Crookston National Guard Armory  
1801 University Ave, Crookston, MN  
56716**

**List Of Vendors Attending**

Beyond the Yellow Ribbon  
Chapter 14 DAV Post, Auxiliary & DAV Transport  
Local County Veteran Service Officers  
Crookston VFW/ American Legion Post & Auxiliary  
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources  
Fargo VA: Multiple Departments  
MDVA-Veterans Nursing Homes  
MDVA Education  
ND Job Services  
Wounded Warrior Guide Service  
Tri Valley  
U.S.D.A.  
V.A. Justice Outreach  
Reginal Vet. Center  
Options, Interstate Resource Center for Independent Living  
Health Insurance sales representatives  
MN/ND Honor Fight  
UND Veterans Education Services  
DEED  
VET CENTER  
**and many more!**



## **MinnFluence- Serving Minnesota's Veterans**

I am thrilled to share with you all MinnFluence, and a little bit about how this can, and already has, changed the landscape of Minnesota's legislative landscape for Veterans, their families, and survivors.

### **What it is-**

MinnFluence is a tool to help connect Veterans and their supporters, directly with their lawmakers at the State level when important action needs to be taken. It is a local alert network that the DAV MN can use, to let you know when your lawmaker is needed to move forward legislation, when votes happen it can update you on how your lawmaker voted, and can keep you informed better throughout the legislative process.

### **How it works-**

When a new MinnFluencer signs up it will ask for address, email, phone, etc.. With that information it will fill in who your State Rep. and State Senator are and what committees they are on, any leadership positions, etc.. With this information the Department's Legislative Director can track key legislation, and when your Rep. or Senator are needed to support something, get a hearing, or could hold a key vote, it allows the DAV MN to reach out to you specifically to take action.

### **What you need to know-**

The next page will have the flyer with QR Code or you can find registration at [www.minnfluence.org](http://www.minnfluence.org) This is not a SPAM generating tool, everything sent out has to be created by the Dept. Legislative Director. Your information will never be shared, sold, or used for anything but to alert for legislative issues. **You do not need to be a Veteran to sign up. All are welcome.**

The MinnFluence Network was already instrumental in the passage of key Veterans legislation in Minnesota, and if we work together to build a larger network our power will only grow.

Regards,

Trent C Dilks  
Legislative Director  
Disabled American Veterans, Dept. of MN

Department of Minnesota, Inc.  
State Veterans Service Building, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
St. Paul, Minnesota 55155

Phone: (651) 291-1212  
Fax: (651) 291-0115  
[www.davmn.org](http://www.davmn.org)

[View this email in your browser](#)



## **Vehicle Registration, Title Fees, Driver's License Fees, etc.. New Benefit Alert– 100% P&T Veterans**

Veterans with a total service-connected disability will be eligible for new benefits from

DVS starting Jan. 1, 2024. What you need to know

- 100% P&T disabled veterans will be exempt from registration fees (including filing fees) for two vehicles of their choosing. This includes passenger vehicles, non-commercial 1-ton pick-ups, motorcycles and RVs.
- Does not include personalized plate fee, annual contributions for special plates, reinstatement fees or impound fees.
- 100% P&T disabled veterans will be exempt from title fees (including filing fees) for vehicles purchased on or after Jan. 1, 2024.
- Does not include salvage inspections or fast track fees.
- Early renewal/titling (before Jan. 1) is not an option for veterans who would like to take advantage of these benefits.
- 100% P&T disabled veterans will be exempt from driver's license and identification card fees for all types of cards: Standard, REAL and Enhanced.
- Starting Jun. 30, 2024 100% P&T disabled veterans will also be exempt from paying motor vehicle sales taxes for vehicles purchased on or after that date.

# Help for Veterans in Suicide Crisis

## COMPACT Act (Section 201)

Veterans in suicide crisis may be eligible to receive emergency health care services at any VA or non-VA facility at no cost.

### How it works

1. Eligible Veterans experiencing an acute suicidal crisis – whether enrolled in VA or not – can go to a VA or non-VA emergency room.
2. Veterans in suicide crisis should call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room for expedited care. No enrollment in VA health care is required.
3. Notify the VA within 72-hours of receiving emergent suicidal care to start the claim for payment and care coordination.
  - Veterans, loved ones, or community providers can make the call to start the claim.

**Only one notification is needed:**

Online portal:

[www.emergencycarereporting.communitycare.va.gov](http://www.emergencycarereporting.communitycare.va.gov)

Phone:

1(844) 724-7842

### Who is eligible

COMPACT Act (Section 201) expands eligibility for coverage for suicidal care for Veterans who may not otherwise be eligible for or may not already be enrolled with VA health care.

Contact VA Eligibility and Enrollment to see if you qualify: 1(877) 222-8387.

### Questions or need help

Fargo VA Health Care System:  
[VHAFARCompactActCareCoordination\\_437@va.gov](mailto:VHAFARCompactActCareCoordination_437@va.gov)

VA



U.S. Department  
of Veterans Affairs



Veterans  
Crisis Line

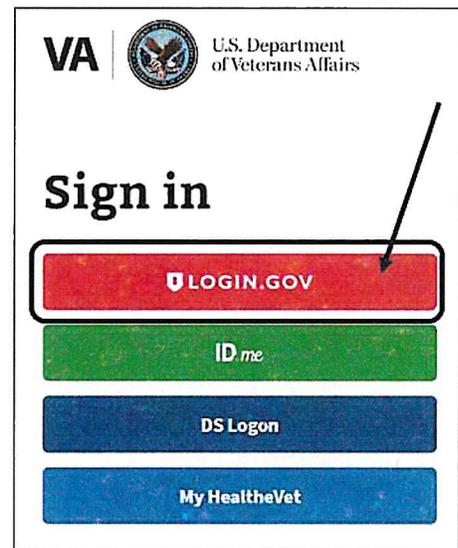
DIAL 988 then PRESS 1



# Creating a Login.gov account for the first time?

Follow these steps to create your account and verify your identity.

1. Go to VA.gov and select **Sign in**.
2. Select **Login.gov** from the sign-in options. We'll take you to the Login.gov website.
3. Select **Create an account**.
4. Enter your personal email. Select your language preference. And accept the rules of use. Then select **Submit**.
5. Check the inbox of the personal email address you entered to create your account. You'll find an email from **Login.gov**. Select **Confirm email address**. This will take you back to the **Login.gov** website.
6. Create your strong **Login.gov** password.
7. Set up multi-factor authentication (MFA) to further protect your account.
8. Sign back in to VA.gov with your new **Login.gov** account.
9. Select **My VA** from the main navigation. If you're on a mobile device, this link may be under your name.
10. Select **Verify your identity** from the alert on your My VA dashboard. We'll take you to the **Login.gov** website to complete the process. You'll need your phone number. You'll also need your driver's license, state-issued ID, and Social Security number.



Learn more about sign in changes coming to VA at [www.va.gov/sign-in-changes](https://www.va.gov/sign-in-changes)



# Steps to login to new MyHealtheVet through VA.gov

- Search VA.gov
- Click on “Sign in” at the top of the page
- Login with account that was created (ID.me/Login.gov)
- Input login information (email and password) and press SIGN IN
- Confirm phone number is correct on the next screen and press “CONTINUE” at the bottom to send the code via text or call
- Write down 6 digit code and enter in the box on the screen and press “CONTINUE”

## **Once signed in-**

- Click on first name at the top (or sometimes it’s just the first letter of your first name) and select the second option down “MyHealtheVet” to access:
  - Future appointments, secure messaging, medication list and refills, and past appointment records

If you have further questions, please stop in or call 701-239-3700, ext 4420





MINNESOTA DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

## State Soldiers Assistance Program

*(SSAP) Providing benefits for Minnesota Veterans for 100 years*

The State Soldiers Assistance Program (SSAP) has provided a variety of benefits for Minnesota Veterans and their families for the past 100 years.

Talk to your County Veterans Service Officer today to learn more about these benefits and others that you may be eligible for!

**Dental** Provides \$1,500 in annual dental assistance and \$6,500 in lifetime assistance for extractions and dentures to Veterans, spouses, and dependents.

**Optical** Provides \$600 in annual optical assistance to Veterans, spouses, and dependents for exams, prescription eye-wear and contact lenses.

**Disaster Relief Grants** Provides financial assistance, upon activation by the Governor, for individuals impacted by a natural disaster.

**Veteran Relief Grants** Provides broad financial assistance to a Veteran or surviving spouse.

**Subsistence** Provides a form of short-term disability to Veterans and surviving spouses who cannot work at their normal occupation for at least 30 days or to surviving spouses within a year of the passing of the Veteran. Assistance includes rent/mortgage, utilities, health care premiums, and cash assistance.

**Surviving Spouse and Dependent Education** Provides a tuition waiver and an annual \$750 stipend to surviving spouses or dependents of certain veterans at any University or College within the M-State or University of Minnesota systems. Benefits are available until a Bachelor's degree is attained, regardless of age.

**Housing/Voucher Deposit Assistance Program (VDAP)** Covers the security deposit for any Veteran or surviving spouse who is moving into subsidized housing and in receipt of a housing choice voucher.

**Contact your County Veterans Service Officer:**

**Thank you for your service!**

More details online at:

[MinnesotaVeteran.org/Benefits](http://MinnesotaVeteran.org/Benefits)



# KARSHI-KHANABAD (K-2) AIR BASE

## Purpose

This fact sheet provides information regarding potential exposures at Karshi- Khanabad (K-2) Air Base.

## Audience

VA employees, K-2 Veterans, Veterans Service Organizations, and the general public.

## Background

Karshi-Khanabad Air Base, also known as K-2 or Camp Stronghold Freedom, was a Soviet-era air base used by U.S. Army, Air Force, and Marine forces from October 2001 to November 2005 to support missions into Afghanistan. The base was one square mile in southeastern Uzbekistan, near the border of Tajikistan, shown in Figure 1. K-2 is currently home to the 60th Separate Mixed Aviation Brigade of the Uzbek Air Force.

Reports from the Defense Health Agency shows sub-surface volatile organic compounds, airborne particulate matter, and depleted uranium fragments were present at K-2 prior to U.S. operations in October 2001.

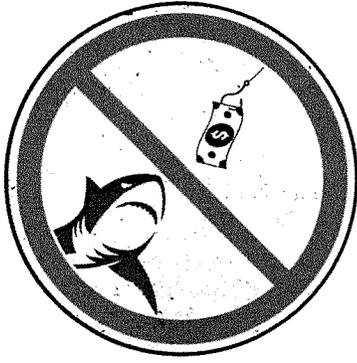


Figure 1. Karshi-Khanabad Air Base, Uzbekistan

## Potential Exposures

The table below provides information regarding potential exposures at K-2 from October 2001 to November 2005, the current status, and next steps.

Potential Exposures	Current Status
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jet fuel</li> <li>• Volatile organic compounds</li> <li>• Particulate matter and dust</li> <li>• Depleted uranium</li> <li>• Asbestos</li> <li>• Lead-based paint</li> <li>• Lead in water samples</li> </ul>	<p>VA currently recognizes presumptions related to Burn Pits and Other Toxins (BPOTs) under 38 U.S.C. § 1119 for those deployed to K-2. If an individual served at K-2, has a recognized presumptive condition, and meets other basic eligibility requirements, they may be eligible for presumptions related to BPOT exposure.</p>



# DON'T FEED THE SHARKS



[DontFeedTheSharks.org](http://DontFeedTheSharks.org)

## What is a "Claim Shark"?

- A Claim Shark is an individual or company that charges hefty fees to "assist" or "consult" veterans with filing their VA benefit claims – this practice is illegal!
- Claim Sharks are not VA accredited, meaning they aren't required to adhere to the well-established professional and ethical standards of VA accreditation, so their advice can often be misleading or even fraudulent.
- Like a "Loan Shark," once you're in, you can't get out, and may be subject to new and hidden fees whenever you get a new rating, no matter who does the work.

## Some of their predatory practices are:

- Promising or guaranteeing an increased disability rating or percentage increase.
- Advertising expedited VA claims decisions.
- Requesting login credentials to access a veteran's personal information through secure VA websites like eBenefits or VA.gov.
- Using confusing tactics or ambiguous language to mislead claimants or coerce them into signing a contract.
- Telling veterans to forego VA exams and offering health consultations within their own network of doctors.

## Who are the Claim Sharks?

- |                      |                         |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| ✦ Trajector Medical  | ✦ Patriot Angels        |
| ✦ Vet Benefits Guide | ✦ Veteran Care Services |
| ✦ Veterans Guardian  | ✦ VetComm               |
| ✦ VA Claims Insider  | ✦ VA Claims Academy     |
| ✦ Telemedica         | ✦ Vet Assist            |

## Veterans can protect themselves by:

- Always working with VA accredited representatives.
- Attending all exams ordered by VA.
- Not signing contracts.
- Not agreeing to fees or payments from future benefits.
- Not agreeing to pay for medical consultations or opinions.
- Not providing access to Protected Health Information or Personal Identifiable Information.

## Who is NOT a Claim Shark?

- VA accredited veterans service organization representatives, like the VFW
- VA accredited claims agents
- VA accredited attorneys
- Attorneys assisting with Camp LeJeune lawsuits who do not charge excessive fees



**Polk County Veterans Services**  
**612 N Broadway #211**  
**Crookston, MN 56716**



### **Polk County Veterans Services Office Hours**

**Crookston Office**

**Monday through Friday**  
**Main PH# 218-281-3066**

**Fosston Office**

**Every Wednesday**  
**Fosston Civic Center**  
**9:00 AM-12:00 PM**

**McIntosh Office**

**Every Wednesday**  
**240 Cleveland Ave SW, McIntosh**  
**1:00 PM-3:30 PM**

**East grand Forks Office**

**Every Tuesday and Thursday**  
**Polk County Human Service Center**  
**1424 Central Ave. NE, East Grand Forks, MN**

